

Current Coverage CPS ASEC Health Insurance Data - released September 2014 - User Note

In the 2014 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC), the Census Bureau implemented redesigned health insurance questions in the CPS ASEC. The new questions improve upon the previous questionnaire, capturing more instances of health insurance coverage than the preceding CPS ASEC.

Estimates of health insurance coverage in the CPS ASEC were not in line with estimates from other sources. As a result, the Census Bureau spent over a decade researching limitations in the survey design and suggesting ways to improve it. In 2010 and 2013, the Census Bureau field tested the redesigned survey, which was ultimately implemented in the 2014 CPS ASEC.

The CPS ASEC collects information on income and health insurance coverage during the entire previous calendar year. The long reference period of the health insurance questions, which asked exclusively about the previous calendar year, possibly contributed to response error. For example, people may have misreported coverage about the previous calendar year because they were either thinking about their present coverage status or may have forgotten spells of coverage they had last year. To address this concern, the redesigned questionnaire asks a new question on current coverage to improve responses to questions about health insurance coverage in the previous calendar year. It also asks about specific gaps in coverage and allows the opportunity for the respondent to report additional coverage.

Estimates of current coverage from the CPS ASEC were disseminated in collaboration with the National Center for Health Statistics. These data are also available through a public use extract file, which includes a variable that indicates whether the individual had health insurance coverage at the time of the interview, and can be merged onto the public use CPS ASEC 2014 dataset.

For more information on the redesigned CPS ASEC, please see:

www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/data/incpovhlth/2013/redesign.html.